

UERSA WALKING GROUP

October - December 2011

Dates: **Thursday, October 6 (short)** **Tuesday, October 18**
 Thursday, November 17 **Monday, November 28 (short)**

Tuesday, November 1
Monday, December 12



The next programme includes (thanks to the continuing generosity of Pat and Sue) the now 'annual' cake walk which is sure to bring a good turn-out and the end of year walk plus lunch along the now complete cycle path from Exmouth to Topsham. The train will take the strain allowing you to choose a start point suitable to your walking enthusiasm along an easy track with wonderful views of the Exe estuary.

Our other leaders again provide a varied set of venues and my thanks on behalf of all participants (now more than 2000!) to them.

The photographs show the marvellous views and unusual features we see on our travels in, for the most part, marvellous weather. Few mind if the weather is poor and the picnic lunches are always relished.

Join us if you haven't come before and come more often if you have!

Trevor **September 2011**
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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- **10.30 am Thursday, 6th October** **Annual Cake Walk** **6 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Circular walk along the coast from Exmouth, returning by an inland route.

You are invited for cakes and tea at the end of the walk.

Start from Sue and Patrick's house, 6 Merrion Avenue, Exmouth EX8 2HX at 10.30 am.

The start is 6 minutes walk from the Elwyn Road stop of the number 57 bus from Exeter (every 15 minutes). Stay on the bus through Exmouth town centre and get off in Salterton Road just after the Cranford Club. Cross Salterton Road and walk the full length of Elwyn Road, turn left at the 'T' junction with Cranford Avenue then first right into Merrion Avenue. Number 6 is the last house on the right, on the corner with Douglas Avenue.

Sue and Patrick

- **10.30 am Tuesday, 18th October** **Haldon Gate** **7.5 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Start : Haldon Gate parking area next to entrance to Haldon Belvedere (Grid Reference SX876859).

Terrain : Typical Mid Devon ups and downs, with classic panoramic views, using quiet lanes and footpaths through woodland and across fields.

Route: Haldon Gate ~ Haldon Grange ~ Webberton Cross ~ School Wood ~ Willhayes Cross ~ Hackaton Plantation ~ Windy Cross ~ Halsbeer Plantation ~ Eastern Hill Wood ~ Morleys Brake ~ Doddiscombsleigh ~ Tick Lane ~ Haldon Gate

Mike and Suzanne

- **10.30 am Tuesday, 1st November** **Postbridge** **7.5 miles**
PICNIC LUNCH REQUIRED

Start from the National Trust Car Park in Postbridge. (OL28 646789)

Moorland walk over variable ground to East Dart waterfall (river crossing).

Pete.

- **10.30 am Thursday, 17th November** **Kentisbeare and Blackborough** **6.5 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Meet at 10.30 at the Village Hall car park Kentisbeare (OS115: 068081)

Take the M5 to Junction 28 (Cullompton). Follow A373 towards Honiton and turn left for Kentisbeare after 1.5 miles.

After 1 mile and before entering village take left turn labelled Village Hall.

The walk will climb up to the local ridgeway and follow mostly footpaths and tracks with some good views and a possible visit to Blackborough House. Refreshment at the Wyndham Arms is available at the end.

David and Lorna

- **10.30 am Monday, 28th November** **Exmouth – Topsham Quay**

The annual lunch walk will be along the Exmouth to Topsham cycle-way (easy walking) with start options from:

10.20	Exmouth (catch 9.48 train from St Davids)	5 miles	
11.10	Lypstone (catch 10.48 train)	3 miles	
11.40	Exton (catch 11.18 train. Ask guard on boarding to stop at Exton)	1.75 miles	
12.20	Topsham Quay	0 miles	

The final section will be along the newly opened length near Topsham, finishing at Topsham Quay for lunch at 'Route 2' the Cycle Café-Bar (formerly the Steam Packet). Do join us for lunch if you are unable to walk.

Trevor

- **10.30 am Monday, 12th December** **Bampton** **7 miles**
PACKED LUNCH REQUIRED

Start in Bampton car park. (GR 955222 – this is on the western side of town, on the left near the church).

Route: Exe Valley Way to Coldharbour Farm. Then Blight's Farm to Ashtown Farm and into Morebath. Morebath to Chiltern Cross on B3190 then footpath back to Bampton. 7 miles, mostly footpaths.

Tom

RECENT WALKS 2011

Bleak House, Lydford, 5th July



For once it was not a good day and the portents were gloomy. Eight of us gathered at the Moor car-park above Lydford and John gave us a brief history of the attempts to make digging peat in the area a commercial success. It was a story of struggle particularly for those who walked the 6 miles from Lydford to work there in the early 19th century.

We started off along the tramway in persistent rain which gradually got more persistent (no shorts today – mainly over-trousers) around Great Links Tor to the working area where little remained of the kiln for drying the peat (after squeezing as

much water out as possible). Fortunately there was enough wall to shelter behind for lunch as it looked as though the rain was about to get heavier.

Miraculously it stopped and from then on it brightened into a beautiful afternoon. In the distance we could see the ruins of Bleak House (aptly named) and, as we walked to it (0.5 miles) over dry peat, I could imagine the Peat Works manager coming to work from the house over the normally saturated peat bog – not an easy task.

The house itself had a previous history probably used by the manager of the tin works (18th century) – much closer on the opposite side from the peat works, with a huge stone cache for storing the tinner's tools over-night under the watchful eye of those in Bleak House.

Then it was a pleasant gentle stroll up to Widgery Cross and then over the common back to the cars, meeting a group of cheerful young ladies from Sherborne School out on their last Duke of Edinburgh expedition.

Thanks, John for an enjoyable and very informative excursion.

Trevor

Branscombe, 22nd July



The day dawned bright and sunny and a dozen or so walkers arrived in very good time all wishing to get an advantageous parking slot in the limited space available. We were briefed of several options, and opt-outs for the faint-hearted, before setting out. After a short spell on the road our path took us through fields of wild flowers and ripe barley to the cliff top overlooking Western Mouth. We took a break to admire the stunning view over a mill-pond, still blue sea towards Sidmouth and Ladram Bay; even better for the short-sighted members of the party who could not see the cliff top caravan parks! Unbeknown to us the slight haze or mist which enhanced the rather surreal atmosphere of this view was heading our way.

We retraced our steps for a short distance and continued along the cliff top path towards Branscombe. The steep path through the ancient potato patches and along the shingle beach walk (option 1) was discounted owing to the high tide, and we continued together through grassland and woods to the Branscombe Mouth cafe for welcome refreshments and picnics.

At this point option 2 kicked in and two members of the party decided to remain, while the hardier (or foolhardy) members continued along the beach, climbing a steep cliff path followed by a somewhat perilous descent arriving back in Branscombe all exhibiting a healthy glow.

As a few spots of rain began to fall, the re-grouped party continued to Branscombe church, via the only thatched working forge remaining in the country. After drooling over the wonderful displays of iron work, there was just time to look at the interior of the Norman church, before splitting up again - some to walk back by road and the majority to tackle the steep incline and return to the Fountain Head Pub through the woods. Sadly by this stage, the pub, which offers its own splendid ale brewed on site, was closed, but at least the rain didn't develop.

Many thanks to Roseanne and Roger for arranging such a splendid walk with so many options to suit all tastes and abilities.

Cathy

Tiverton Canal, 8th August



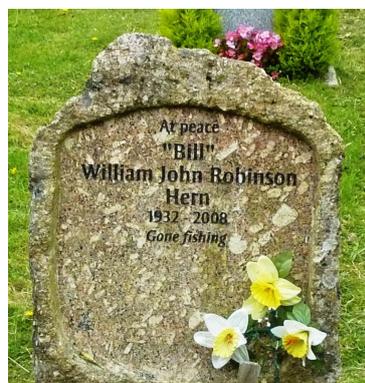
My instructions gave four travel options and, on the day, all four were activated with a fifth discovered by the independent minded (a different bus with a long scenic route!). Ten lunched at the canal and by 2 pm 16 had gathered for the walk. However two, who had lunched well and enjoyed the bar on the boat (hope you can't see them!), departed with mutterings about having to go to Botswana to get a yellow fever vaccination (or did I mishear?).

The rest set off in pleasantly warm conditions along the canal which was looking particularly tranquil with beautiful views of the countryside. Although initially busy along the towpath, it soon quietened down and we were able to keep ahead of the horse-drawn barge. I had been warned that a deviant trio planned to take the shorter option and so they did even though they looked as though they were well capable of the 'full monty'. I shepherded them to the return cycle route pointing them in the right direction. I muttered about teas at Tiverton but got an evasive answer. Later I discovered that the real goal was 'G & Ts' at five – c'est la vie as they say in Pennsylvania.

The rest of us continued, resting near the farthest point at a pleasant picnic area. Just before heading along the road that led back towards Tiverton, the canal had been dammed and water was being pumped from further up into the canal on the Tiverton side. A notice explained that, with effect from that very day, this was to raise the water level to ease the work of the beautiful heavy horse pulling the barge – the barge was scraping the mud in the canal so a much greater hauling effort had been needed. Fortunately the road section was soon over and we cut down to the cycle track along the old railway branch route from Tiverton Junction. Then it was a leisurely stroll back to Tiverton where we could admire the 'Old Blundell School' building of 1604.

Trevor

Lustleigh, 25th August



11 of us turned up on an initially greyish but dry day for what proved to be an attractive walk out of Lustleigh. Tom, our leader for the day, determined a route that took us past the village's stone May Queen throne (none of the party attempted to usurp the present incumbent!) and up via Sharpitor to the Iron Age fort at Hunter's Tor from which there were some splendid views towards North Bovey and further south west over the moor. Then it was downhill to cross the River Bovey (where two of our number departed to return direct to Lustleigh) and up to Manaton (via Manaton Rocks) for lunch and one of the UERSA walking group's favourite picnic spots – the comfy, squashy seats outside the Manaton cricket pavilion! With stomachs replete and a quick look at the Manaton churchyard ('Gone fishing' was one lovely gravestone tribute!), the group set off to Houndtor Wood, with the Bovey rushing along the bottom of the river valley. However, down is usually followed by up and sure enough, we were faced with the steepest climb of the day out of the valley past Gradner Rocks towards Rudge before returning to Lustleigh, and tea for some. With the odd detour, Tom's pedometer suggested 9½ miles. Thanks to him (and the occasional contribution by Mike and Pete!) for a very enjoyable day.

David

Newton St. Cyres, 7th September



Fifteen intrepid walkers led by John Boyle set out from Newton St Cyres in sunshine which soon turned to showers, some quite heavy, on a pleasant and varied 7 mile walk with some splendid views taking in a panorama from the Exe valley to the estuary. We walked up through the village, then via fields and woods skirting Sherwood House (no Sherwood forest, or outlaws, however, only signs warning of wild pigs!). We climbed up to the ridge and past the large radio mast, a familiar sight on the skyline for inhabitants of Exeter. We had lunch near the top with fine views over to Killerton and Silverton and saw four buzzards circling (on the lookout for stragglers?) We then came down on to roads for our return to Newton, washing our boots in the ford. This walk included the 2,000th walker, suitably rewarded by Trevor after a brain-teasing quiz with a bottle of bubbly!

Alastair Logan

Fingle Bridge, 23rd September



Eight walkers including David Smith, the photographer, enjoyed another of Tom's superb walks on a beautiful day.